



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Child Development and Early
Education

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

ANNA CARTER • Director

NC PRE-K STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 7, 2019

10:00am-1:00pm

NC Partnership for Children

Committee Members: Lorie Barnes, Stacey Bailey, Angela Beacham, Smokie Brawley, Victoria Byrd, Pam Dowdy, Zac Everhart, Shari Funkhouser, Carla Garrett, Kristen Guillory, Renee Harrell, Kelly Huff, Vivian James, Jessica Lowery, Karen McKnight, Perry Melton, Frances Mercer, Anna Mercer-McLean, Elizabeth Mitchell, Sharon Palsha, Dana Ramsey, Patsy Reavis, Michele Rivest, Susan Robinson, Janet Singerman, Dan Tetreault, Vance Thomas, Donna White, Henrietta Zalkind

Committee Member Attendees: Lorie Barnes (phone), Stacey Bailey (phone), Angela Beacham (phone), Pam Dowdy, Carla Garrett (phone), Harrell, Kelly Huff, Jessica Lowery (phone), Perry Melton, Anna Mercer-McLean, Sharon Palsha (phone), Dana Ramsey (Okeyma Wright), Patsy Reavis, Michele Rivest (Winona Weindling(phone)), Janet Singerman, Vance Thomas, Donna White, Henrietta Zalkind

Committee Members Absent: Smokie Brawley, Victoria Byrd, Zac Everhart, Shari Funkhouser, Kristen Guillory, Karen McKnight, Frances Mercer, Elizabeth Mitchell, Vivian James, Susan Robinson, Dan Tetreault

DCDEE Staff: Lorena Gonzalez, Jennifer Griffith, Rachel Kaplan, Fran Minton, Kristi Snuggs, Sharon Spigner, Sharon Stukes (phone)

Welcome, Introductions & Roll Call

Ms. Kristy Snuggs and Ms. Lorena Gonzalez greeted the group.

Ms. Rachel Kaplan performed roll call.

Consensus on meeting minutes September 27, 2018.

Ms. Anna Mercer-McLean motioned to approve minutes; Mr. Vance Thomas seconded. They were unanimously approved.

DCDEE Updates:

- EC Action Plan
- Preschool Development Grant -Ms. Snuggs discussed that it is a one-year grant that requires a needs assessment strategic plan must be completed and submitted; Ms. White spoke that family engagement is a big component and that a statewide family engagement coalition has been formed with NCPC in partnership with DCDEE.
- Transition Summary-Ms. Snuggs provided a history of the State Agency Collaboration on Early Childhood Education/Preschool to Kindergarten Transition Pilot Phases I & II

Phase I—3 counties—Craven, Davidson, Iredell

- Communication, virtual training and on-site support for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers by the ELN Consultants and State Leadership Team
- Collected feedback from pilot participants
- Convened a work group of pilot Pre-K and K sites to capture additional input from Pre-K and K teachers and families
- Made revisions to the Child Development Information Form to capture requested data
- Finalized a draft transition planning template
- Secured PDG of \$4.5 million

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER



- Transition Coordinator
- State Data Sharing Platform

Phase II-- Selected 16 additional counties for Phase II Pilot

- Conducting Regional Orientation Meetings to share expectations
 - Buncombe County – January 22, 2019
 - Nash County – January 31, 2019
 - Onslow County – February 6, 2019
 - Guilford County – February 20, 2019
- Pilot revised Child Information Form with 19 counties
- Pilot the transition planning template in spring 2019
- Recruited additional consultants to provide support
- Continue state-level work to secure a data sharing platform
- Continue work on Family Engagement Strategies
- Link work of other teams and committees

Transition Plans	School Year			
	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2025
	NC Pre-K classrooms in 10 counties	NC Pre-K classrooms in 30 counties	NC Pre-K and Subsidy classrooms in 100 counties	All four-year-old classrooms in 100 counties

What have we learned?

- Kindergarten teachers want more social/emotional information
- Families need to be more engaged in the transition process
- Use family-friendly language when sharing skill progression with parents
- Pre-K and Kindergarten Teachers need opportunities to work together
- Pre-K paperwork can be overwhelming
- At present, no consistent way to share child specific data
- Must build local capacity to support transition work
- Need local autonomy for transition strategies
- Create an onboarding process for interested parties

Ms. Janet Singerman expressed her excitement about this endeavor; however, she expressed concern that the plans to expand to child care wait until 2025. There are 4-year old children in child care for whom this is important that it is not going to reach. She understands the different challenges for the child care community. Ms. Snuggs stated that in order to scale this, certain changes need to be made. She explained that right now we have leverage with NC Pre-K and Subsidy to require transition plans, while cannot currently require it for all child care; however, those who want to participate are welcomed.

Ms. Renee Harrell first mentioned that the transition meeting held in Onslow county revealed the tremendous progress in the pilot between Phase I and Phase II. She further talked about some ideas concerning onboarding of non-NC Pre-K childcare.

Ms. Sharon Spigner suggested including other classrooms for participating sites; this would be an organic transition.

Key Considerations for Scaling Transition Activities

- Pre-K to K transition activities will potentially require:
 - Rule/legislative changes – if transition planning should be required
 - Enabling data system
 - Resource analysis – for data system and teacher/school needs
 - Transition plan activity development for K-3

➤ Recommendation from B-3-Intergovernmental Council

Ms. Snuggs referenced the handout “Birth – 3rd Grade Interagency Council Work Group Visions and Policy Recommendations”

Transitions and Continuity Subcommittee

Recommendation 1

- G.S. 115C-105.41 addresses the identification of “students who are at risk for academic failure and who are not successfully progressing toward grade promotion and graduation, beginning in kindergarten” and directs local boards of education to “adopt policies that direct school improvement teams to develop plans to include successful transition between elementary and middle school years and between the middle school and high school years for students at risk, as defined by the State Board of Education.” The work group recommends that this law be amended to include a requirement for LEAs to work with community Early Care and Education partners to develop a plan for transitioning all children into kindergarten.

Recommendation 2

In order to create shared responsibility for cross-programmatic planning for transitioning all children into kindergarten, this recommendation has five parts:

- Establish an MOU between state partners
- Revise the State Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan to include strategies to further support meaningful alignment and coordination between early care and education and K–12
- The development of a State Board of Education Policy under the “Kindergarten/Early Childhood (KNEC)” section that defines LEA requirements for transition planning for all children from Pre-K into kindergarten.
- Revise NC Pre-K policies related local transition planning for transitions from NC Pre-K programs in to kindergarten to require that NC Pre-K Contract Administrators coordinate with Local Education Agency decision makers, Head Start Grantees, local Smart Start partnerships, private childcare providers, families, and other community partners to develop a community plan for kindergarten transition as described above in 2b.
- Identify revisions to child care rules and/or QRIS to include language related to collaborative planning for transitioning children from four-year-old programs receiving childcare subsidy into kindergarten.

Recommendation 3

- The B-3 Interagency Council submit a request for funding through a fiscal note for a data system to facilitate the sharing of child and family information between programs serving 4-year-olds and LEAs as well as funding for human resources to support statewide scale-up and implementation to all programs serving 4-year-olds and all elementary schools.

Data Driven Improvement and Outcomes Subcommittee

Recommendation 1

Undertake an analysis and assessment of the 0-8 data landscape, (e.g., health, education, child welfare, etc.). This analysis will include, but not be limited to, data quality, data ownership, data governance, data access, data systems, and data gaps. This analysis should include an evaluation of strengths and limitations of each relevant data system.

Recommendation 2

Conduct a broad survey among teachers, administrators, policy-makers, governmental agencies, organizations and other stakeholders of the 0-8 data to which they would like to have access on a regular basis and what types of questions they would like to have answered.

Teacher and Administrator Preparation and Effectiveness Subcommittee

Recommendation 1

Undertake a study of the licensure system to determine changes needed to align with the birth to 8 continuum, along with the research from P2P, Pathways, the NAM report on Transforming the Workforce and the work underway with the Professional Education Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC). This study could be completed by direction provided by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 2

Professional development related to early childhood education specific for elementary school principals be developed, and there be incentives provided for them to complete. North Carolina should look at a program such as in Washington State as a viable model

Recommendation 3

The Council submit to the Child Care Commission a recommendation that the requirements for Pre-K teacher assistants be amended to require all teacher assistants, regardless of setting, have a minimum of a CDA and be working towards an AAS in Early Childhood, and complete at least 15 hours of annual in-service professional development.

Recommendation 4

The Council recommend to the General Assembly that additional funds be allocated in order to increase the NC Pre-K reimbursement rates to reflect the cost for hiring high-quality educators, as defined in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance.

Ms. Donna White expressed that she is hopeful that the subcommittee is attending to infant toddler timeframe as well. Ms. Singerman asked about CDA capacity to absorb the new recommendations. Ms. Snuggs says she knows that there are discussions addressing these implementation concerns

- Criminal Background Check-Public School- Ms. Snuggs discussed that there is no longer a waiver for public schools. All public school teachers will have to adhere to same level of scrutiny as private child care employees. Ms. Dowdy asked that the goal is that this will be in place for September. Ms. Snuggs said that is the goal.
- **Attendance Data Presentation**
 - NC Pre-K enrollment—51% Public school; 37% Private Sites, 12% Head Start
 - A Child is deemed "Chronically Absent" (CA) if the child is absent **more than 104%** of the days he/she was enrolled.
 - 15% overall; 19% Head Start; 15% Private Sites; 11% public school
 - County breakdown-46% under 10%; 34% between 11 and 24%; 20% have over 25%
 - Region of state—Ms. Snuggs revealed that the greatest amount of chronic absenteeism is located in the west.
 - The committee discussed potential reasons why there is great chronic absenteeism in the west, including weather, rurality, transportation, culture;
 - Ms. Stacey Bailey pointed out that majority of Head Start programs are in the west.
 - Ms. Singerman suggested examining the breakdown by type within each region.
 - Mr. Perry Melton expressed concern about inclement weather days preventing children from getting to schools in the west.
 - Ms. Snuggs showed a list of 16 counties with the highest chronic absenteeism. Ms. Dowdy stated in her experience, transportation is a primary reason for chronic absenteeism. Ms. White suggested comparing the chronic absenteeism of the Pre-K and Kindergarten in the same counties when there is transportation, to see if the trends are similar.
 - Ms. Pam Dowdy pointed out that this is also a cultural issue of taking Pre-K seriously and deemed “real” school and required.
 - Ms. Singerman discussed that there are both reimbursement rate issues funding transportation and culture issues.
 - Ms. Snuggs showed list of 14 counties with 5% or lower chronic absenteeism, which included poor communities without transportation that would lead to questioning whether the issue of chronic absenteeism is due to lack of transportation.
 - Ms. Carla Garrett pointed out instance of two counties side by side at VA border at opposite ends of spectrum.
 - Ms. Angela Beacham expressed interest in the correlation of these rates with k-5 attendance records.
 - Ms. Kaplan brought up two issues: chronic absenteeism and turnover rates. Ms. Singerman discussed the importance of looking at turnover along with chronic absenteeism.
 - Ms. Dowdy asked that the Committee develop recommendations of key benchmarks that would be examined statewide to create reports for local contractors.
 - Ms. Mercer-McLean pointed out need to find out if the counties with high chronic absenteeism are following policies and procedures.
 - A discussion ensued about consistent, standardized, reporting of contractors across the state.

NC PreK Recommendations, Updates

- NIEER Report

A discussion ensued about the definition of “capacity”. Ms. Henrietta Zalkind encouraged this committee to make recommendations about what it means to build capacity.

A discussion ensued about the potential implications of the recommendation “Explore allocating NC Pre-K funding through the public school funding formula in such a way that the program is jointly funded by state, local, and federal dollars for all NC Pre-K children, regardless of whether they are served in a public school, private center, or Head Start. This would expand access to nonstate dollars. School districts would be required to accommodate all eligible children seeking enrollment. Private centers could continue to participate through contracts with districts. States that use the school funding formula for Pre-K in a mixed delivery system include Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.”

Committee members expressed the importance of maintaining a mixed delivery model.

Ms. Singerman expressed concern over recommendation “Explore mechanisms to better utilize child care subsidy and NC Pre-K dollars to serve the same child at the same public school or private center to allow more flexibility to serve eligible children.” Ms. Zalkind and Ms. Kristi both stated that read this as concerning wrap services.

Ms. Singerman stated that the committee needs to support the entire birth-5 continuum.

Mr. Melton stated the primary issue he faces is providing adequate teacher salaries necessary to obtain and retain qualified teachers.

- Carryover/Unspent funds
- Electronic Transcripts

Governance

An overhaul to the NC Pre-K Policy Requirements is in process. The new changes will be implemented from 2020-2021-

Ms. Gonzalez presented some of the potential changes to the Requirements and received feedback from the Committee.

- Local NC Pre-K Committee Membership
- Program Requirements & Guidance
 - Eligibility
 - Site Selection
 - NC Pre-K Committee
- Early Education Branch Restructure—Ms. Gonzalez discussed plans for the restructuring of the EEB, including hiring a new NC Pre-K manager.
- NC Pre-K position/support—Ms. Gonzalez discussed future plans for hiring a coordinator, support position to allow the NC Pre-K consultants to spend more time in the field assisting contractors.

Other Discussion Topics

- Regional Meetings
 - **Tuesday, February 19** – Guilford Child Development, 1200 Arlington Street, Greensboro, NC 27406
 - **Thursday, February 21**--Western Piedmont Community College/Foothills Higher Education Center – 2128 South Sterling Street, Morganton, NC 28655
 - **Tuesday, February 26** – Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, 351 Wagoner Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28303
 - **Wednesday, February 27** – Martin County Economic Development Corporation/Telecenter, 415 East Blvd., Williamston, NC 27892

Announcements and Other Updates - Committee Members

- Governor’s Commission on Access to Sound, Basic Education—Ms. Zalkind provided an update of the work surrounding the case.

Wrap up

- Action Steps
- Next Meeting: April 4th, 2019

Ms. Snuggs and Ms. Gonzalez thanked the Committee for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Adjourn

Thank you for your time and commitment to this work